

Herodotus' Description of the East Mediterranean Coast

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# Herodotus' Description of the East Mediterranean Coast

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*Herodotus' description of the East Mediterranean coastline is seen to reflect socio-ethnic and political arrangements in effect since the Late Bronze Age which continued through the Iron Age and into the Hellenistic period.*

Sources for the geography of the eastern Mediterranean littoral, today often called the Levant, are quite scarce for the Persian period. Although there are some references to the "Satrapy Beyond the River" (*eber nāri* = עֵבֶר הַנָּהָר = עֵבֶר נְהַרָה) in Akkadian and Aramaic documents (Rainey 1983), there is very little data on the geography and ethnography of that satrapy (cf. Aharoni et al. 1993: 130–32, map 171). Therefore, a special importance attaches to the description by the historian Herodotus of what he calls the "Fifth Satrapy" of the Persian Empire. Of course, the Persians did not number the satrapies in this manner; Herodotus was numbering them from the point of view of one looking from Greece eastward. In view of some striking parallels among Late Bronze, Iron Age, and Hellenistic sources concerning the division of the Levant (Rainey 1996), it may prove instructive to review Herodotus' description in the light of such sources. It has often been remarked that Herodotus gives no details about the internal configuration of the satrapy. He knows it only from the coast. The main passage (III, 91) is as follows (all quotes from Herodotus according to Hude 1927):

ἀπὸ δὲ Ποσιδηίου πόλιος, τὴν Ἀμφίλοχος ὁ Ἀμφιάρεω οἰκίσει ἐπ' οὖροις τοῖσι Κυλίκων τε καὶ Συρίων, ἀρξάμενον ἀπὸ ταύτης μέχρι Αἰγύπτου, πλὴν μοίρης τῆς Ἀραβίων (ταῦτα γὰρ ἦν ἀτελέα), πεντήκοντα καὶ τριηκόσια τάλαντα φόρος ἦν· ἔστι δὲ ἐν τῷ νοτῷ τούτῳ Φοινίκη τε πᾶσα καὶ Συρία ἡ Παλαιστίνην καλεομένη καὶ Κύπρος· νομὸς πέμπτος οὗτος.

From the town of Posideion, which was founded by Amphilochus son of Amphiaras, on the border between Cilicia and Syria, beginning from this as far as Egypt—omitting Arabian territory (which was free of tax), came 350 talents. In this province is the whole of Phoenicia and that part of Syria which is called Palestine, and Cyprus. This is the fifth province.

It was Leuze (1935: 261) who pointed out that the actual border was undoubtedly somewhat north of the city of Posideion and that Herodotus says Posideion was situated on the border of Cilicia and Syria, not Phoenicia. Elsewhere, Herodotus says

ἰμουρέει γὰρ ἡ Συρία Αἰγύπτῳ, οἱ δὲ Φοίνικες, τῶν ἔστι ἡ Σιδῶν, ἐν τῇ Συρίᾳ οἰκέουσι.

For Syria borders on Egypt, and the Phoenicians, to whom belongs Sidon, dwell in Syria. (Herodotus II, 116)

So Herodotus considers Phoenicia to be part of Syria, but he never called the Phoenicians Syrians (as he does the Palestinians, cf. *infra*). It is also worthy of note that Sidon is singled out as the most prominent city in Phoenicia, thus reflecting a situation that prevailed throughout the Persian period. One might also note that "Sidonians" is the biblical term for "Phoenicians."

It can safely be inferred, therefore, that Phoenicia does *not* border directly on Cilicia. There is a segment of the northern coast that is Syrian, not Phoenician. This concept finds confirmation from the Hellenistic-Roman period in the coins minted

by Beirut. Weippert (1980: 354) has assembled the numismatic evidence pertaining to the name of Beirut on its coins, *l'dk' ʔʃ bkn'n*. “Laodicea which is in Canaan,” along with a Greek monogram, either ΛΑ(οδίκεια) Φ or ΒΗ(ρυτος). Other coins have *lbyrt* “Of Beirut,” also with the monogram ΛΑ Φ, which Weippert rightly surmises should represent Λαοδίκεια ἡ ἐν Φοινίκη, “Laodicea which is in Phoenicia.” Besides the equation of Phoenicia with Canaan, the most important fact is that the Λαοδίκεια of Beirut is identified as being in Canaan, thus distinguishing it from Λαοδίκεια ἐπὶ τῇ θαλάττῃ, “Laodicea on the sea” (Strabo XVI, 2:9), which is modern-day Latikia just 11 km south of Râs Shamra! This latter Laodicea is thus not in Canaan/Phoenicia! So the Hellenistic geographical concept of equating the northern limits of Canaan with Phoenicia seems to correspond to the same conception going back to the Late Bronze Age sources (Rainey 1996).

Where the actual border of Phoenicia may have been is hard to establish, but Phoenicia must have included Arvad (ʿArwād) = Arados (Ἄραδος), the island of er-Ruād off the Syrian coast north of Tripoli (Τρίπολις = modern Ṭrâblus). This is indicated by Pseudo-Scylax 104, in which the preserved text (as in Gallling 1964: 204) reads:

Ἀπὸ δε Θαψάκου ποταμοῦ ἐστὶ Τρίπολις Φοινίκων,  
Ἄραδος νῆσος καὶ λιμὴν . . . καὶ ἐν τῇ χερρονήσῳ  
ἐτέρα πόλις Τρίπολις.

And after the Thapsakos (Orontes!) river is Tripoli of the Phoenicians, Arados an island and a harbor . . . and on the peninsula another city, Tripoli.

Galling (1964: 204) proposed an amendment to this text in order to make sense out of the ἐτέρα πόλις “another city” introducing Tripoli. After all, Arados is north of Tripoli. Therefore, Gallling reads:

Ἀπὸ δε Θαψάκου ποταμοῦ ἐστὶν **πρώτη** πόλις  
Φοινίκων, Ἄραδος νῆσος καὶ λιμὴν . . . καὶ ἐν τῇ  
χερρονήσῳ ἐτέρα πόλις Τρίπολις.

And after the Thapsakos (Orontes!) river is **the first** city of the Phoenicians, Arados an island and a harbor . . . and on the peninsula another city, Tripoli.

So in spite of the odd confusion by which the Orontes is called Thapsakos, and the awkward construction of the original, Gallling’s emendation at least makes sense. And thus we can fill in somewhat the coastal map where Herodotus does not go into detail.

Going farther down the coast, Herodotus explains that ἐστὶ δὲ ἐν τῷ νομῷ τούτῳ Φοινίκη τε πᾶσα καὶ Συρία ἡ Παλαιστίνη καλεομένη, “In this province

is the whole of Phoenicia and that part of Syria which is called Palestine.” He does not specify any boundary line between Phoenicia and Palestine. And in trying to fix such a border, we must deal with the status of the seaport town of Joppa (Yāpô = Arabic Yâfâ). In Pseudo-Scylax, Dor is assigned to the Sidonians and Ashkelon to the Tyrians. The Palestinians (Philistines) don’t exist. In between these two major seaports, Joppa is listed without being assigned to either of the great Phoenician cities. Pseudo-Scylax cannot help us.

In the seventh century B.C.E. the situation is also unclear. Esarhaddon, in his treaty with Baʿlu of Tyre, inserts the following provision:

*annûte kārē hūlē ša Aššūr-aḫu-iddina šar māt  
Aššūr ana Baʿlu ardišu ʿipqīʿ[duni]: ana āl Akkô,  
āl Dôʿri ina nagê māt Piliste gab[bu] u ina ālāne  
taḫūme ša māt Aššūr ša šiddi tāmtim gab[bu] u ina  
āl Gublu šadu Labna[na] ālāne ša ina šadi gabb[u]  
ammar ālāne [ša Ašš]ur-aḫu-iddina, šar māt Aššūr.*

These are the ports of trade and the trade routes which Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, entrusted to his servant, Baʿlu: to the city of ʿAkkô, the city of Dôʿr, to the entire district of the land of Philistia, and to all the cities within Assyrian territory on the sea-coast, and to Byblos, Mt. Lebanon, all the cities in the mountains, whatever cities [belong to Esar]haddon, king of the land of Assyria. (After Parpola and Watanabe 1988: 25)

A. Gilboa (1996: 132–33) has emphasized the fact that the crucial verb in this passage, ʿipqīʿ[du-ni], is not only partially effaced; it is also somewhat ambiguous. Esarhaddon “entrusted” these trading colonies and trade routes to Baʿlu, king of Tyre. But what does that mean? It does not necessarily mean that Baʿlu was given political control over the various cities listed. However, it certainly must indicate that Baʿlu is recognized as Esarhaddon’s principal executive in charge of maritime and overland commerce related to the eastern Mediterranean coast. For our purposes, the geographic definitions of the southern coast are significant, *ana āl Akkô, āl Dôʿri ina nagê māt Piliste gab[bu]* “to the city of ʿAkkô, the city of Dôʿr, to the entire district of the land of Philistia.”

What we would like to know is, where was the border between the territory of Dôʿr and the “district of the land of Philistia.” Incidentally, it must be noted that the phrase *māt(KUR) Pi-lis-te* has no marker that would indicate an ethnonym (Philistines). Where was Joppa in this division? During the late eighth century B.C.E. it was recorded:

*ina mētiq gerriya āl Bīt-Dagāna, āl Yāpū, āl Banay-Barqa, āl Azōru, ālāni ša Šidqā ša ana šēpēya arhiš lā iknušu alme, akšud, ašlula šallassun. . . .*

In the course of my campaign the town of Bêt-Dagān, the town of Yāpō, the town of Banay-Barqa, the town of ʿAzōru, towns belonging to Šidqā who had not bowed at my feet immediately, I surrounded, I conquered, I despoiled. (Sennacherib's Third Campaign, after Borger 1979: I, 74)

Šidqā was the king of Ashkelon (Borger 1979: I, 73) and, for his failure to submit to Sennacherib, was removed from office. However, prior to Sennacherib's campaign, Šidqā had enjoyed control over Joppa and its hinterland. When did this come about? Was it under the reign of Sargon II? Most likely it came about during or just after the campaigning of Tiglath-pileser III (between 734 and 732 B.C.E.) when the Philistines were able to remove the stigma of Uzziah's occupation of northern Philistia (2 Chr 26:6; Aharoni et al. 1993: 106–7, map 141) by penetrating deep into Judaeen territory along the principal routes leading from the coastal plain up to the hill country (2 Chr 28:18). During the reign of Jeroboam II it is most likely that Joppa was still firmly under Israelite control, especially since Uzziah had established a strong Judaeen presence across northern Philistia to the south of Joppa in the territory of Jabneel and Ashdod.

So Joppa changed hands from time to time. From the mid-fifth century, not far from the visit by Herodotus, comes a new testimony about the control of Dôʿr and Joppa.

ועד יתן לנו אדן מלכמ אית דאר ויפי ארצת דגן האדרת אש  
בשד שרן “and the Lord of Kings gave us Dor and  
Joppa, the mighty grain lands which are in the ter-  
ritory of Sharon.” (Eshmunazer; Donner and Röllig  
1962: I, 3, No. 14:18)

Here the Sidonian scribe clearly considered both Dor and Joppa as part of the “territory of Sharon.” The Persian king was increasing the agricultural hinterland of Sidon as a reward for loyal service. The “mighty grain lands” must have included considerable territory east of Joppa, especially along the modern Naḥal Ayalon. The territory south of Nahr el-ʿAujā was obviously reckoned as part of the Sharon Plain in the mid-fifth century B.C.E. (Rainey 1990: 59, 69).

That this area was made a part of Sidon's territory explains why Nehemiah did not want to confer with his neighboring governors in the “Valley of Ono” (Neh 6:2). The entire region was controlled by the Phoenician king of Sidon, so, in spite of a consider-

able Jewish population in Ono and the neighboring towns (Neh 11:33–35), Nehemiah had good reason to suspect that he was liable to fall into a trap. There is no reason to assume that the Valley of Ono was ever a part of the Yehud province during the Persian period (Avi-Yonah 1977: 17–18 and Aharoni et al. 1993: 129–30, maps 170–71 *contra* Aharoni and Avi-Yonah 1977: 109, map 171; Aharoni 1979: 416, map 34; Kallai 1983: 75, map).

The extent of Philistia in Herodotus' day is also limited in the south. The relevant passage (III, 5) which gives us some detail is:

μόνη δὲ ταύτῃ εἰσὶ φανεραὶ ἐσβολαὶ ἐς Αἴγυπτον· ἀπὸ γὰρ Φοινίκης μέχρι οὖρων τῶν Καδύτιος πόλιός [ἦ] ἐστὶ Συρίων τῶν Παλαιστίνων καλεομένων· ἀπὸ δὲ Καδύτιος πόλιος ἐούσης, ὥς ἐμοὶ δοκέει, Σαρδίων οὐ πολλῷ ἐλάσσονος, ἀπὸ ταύτης τὰ ἐμπόρια τὰ ἐπὶ θαλάσσης μέχρι Ἰηυνίου πόλιός ἐστι τοῦ Ἀραβίου, ἀπὸ δὲ Ἰηυνίου αὖτις Συρίων μέχρι Σερβωνίδος λίμνης, παρ' ἣν δὴ τὸ Κάσιον ὄρος τείνει ἐς θάλασσαν· ἀπὸ Σερβωνίδος λίμνης, ἐν τῇ δὴ λόγος τὸν Τυφῶ κεκρῦφθαι, ἀπὸ ταύτης ἤδη Αἴγυπτος. τὸ δὲ μεταξὺ Ἰηυνίου πόλιος καὶ Κασίου τε ὄρεος καὶ τῆς Σερβωνίδος λίμνης, ἐδὸν τοῦτο οὐκ ὀλίγον χωρίον ἀλλὰ ὅσον τε ἐπὶ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ὁδοῦ, ἀνδρὸν ἐστὶ δεινῶς.

Only through this (Arabian desert) is there entry into Egypt. For from Phoenicia to the boundaries of Kadytis it belongs to the Syrians known as “Palestinian”: from Kadytis, a town, I should say, not much smaller than Sardis, the seaports as far as Ienysus belong to the Arabian; from Ienysus as far as Lake Serbonis it is again Syrian, near which Mt. Casius runs down to the sea; and after Lake Serbonis (where Typhon is supposed to be buried), from there it is already Egypt. The whole area between Ienysus on the one side, and Mt. Casius and the Lake on the other—and it is of considerable extent, not less than three day's journey—is desert and completely without water.

Herodotus knows that ἀπὸ γὰρ Φοινίκης μέχρι οὖρων τῶν Καδύτιος πόλιός [ἦ] ἐστὶ Συρίων τῶν Παλαιστίνων καλεομένων, “For from Phoenicia to the boundaries of Kadytis it belongs to the Syrians known as ‘Palestinian.’” Much to our discomfort, Herodotus does not specify either the boundary of Phoenicia or of Kadytis. On the basis of the Eshmunazer text cited above, we may assume that the course of the Sorek (Nahr Rübîn) probably marked the southern extent of the hinterland of Joppa (which Herodotus does not mention at all). The northern border of the land belonging to Kadytis must have lain somewhere between Ashkelon and Gaza. The striking change, of course, is that Gaza is in the hands of an Arabian.

Cambyes had found this Arabian king in control of Kadytis (Gaza) when he passed through on his way to Egypt in 525 B.C.E., and his invasion of Egypt could not have been accomplished without the Arabian's support in conveying his troops across the Sinai Desert.

The question naturally arises as to when the Arabian king had gained control of Gaza and the associated coastal strip. There is no hint of such a situation during Nebuchadnezzar's campaigns in the final years of the seventh and the early years of the sixth centuries B.C.E. Three broad possibilities come to mind: either the Arabians were encouraged to occupy Gaza and the northern Sinai coast by Nabu-naid during his ten-year sojourn in northern Arabia when he was developing the infrastructure to support the extensive caravan trade from Babylon and the lands of southern Arabia (552–542 B.C.E.), or the seizure of Gaza might have come in the aftermath of Nabu-naid's return to Babylon in 542 B.C.E. or after the news went out that Cyrus had captured Babylon (539 B.C.E.). The identity of these Arabians may find confirmation in the inscribed silver bowl from Tell el-Maškhûta in Egypt. The Aramaic inscription reads *זי קינו בר גשמ* “That which Qainu son of Gašem king of Qedar presented to Hanʿallat” (Rabinowitz 1956: 2).

Southwest from Gaza the sphere of Arabian control extended, as Herodotus explained:

ἀπὸ δὲ Ῥαδύτιος πόλιος ἐούσης, ὥς ἐμοὶ δοκέει, Σαρδίων οὐ πολλῷ ἐλάσσονος, ἀπὸ ταύτης τὰ ἐμπόρια τὰ ἐπὶ θαλάσσης μέχρι Ἰηύσου πόλιός ἐστι τοῦ Ἀραβίου,

... from Kadytis, a town, I should say, not much smaller than Sardis, the seaports as far as Ienysus belong to the Arabian.

The “Arabian strip” extended to a place called Ienysus. It is tempting to equate this latter place with Khân Yûnis because of the superficial phonetic resemblance. But Herodotus gives a specific detail that prevents that identification.

τὸ δὲ μεταξὺ Ἰηνύσου πόλιος καὶ Κασίου τε ὄρεος καὶ τῆς Σερβωνίδος λίμνης, ἐὼν τοῦτο οὐκ ὀλίγον χωρίον ἀλλὰ ὅσον τε ἐπὶ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ὁδοῦ, ἄνυδρόν ἐστι δεινῶς.

The whole area between Ienysus on the one side, and Mt. Casius and the Lake on the other—and it is of considerable extent, not less than three day's journey—is desert and completely without water.

He is not very precise when he says “and Mt. Casius (Râs el-Kasrûn) and the Lake on the other,” but in

the final analysis, the chief border city was Pelusion. However, Herodotus' determination that it was at least a three-day march from Mt. Casius/Lake Serbonis to Ienysus may be compared with Titus' march from Pelusion to Rhinocolura in three days (Josephus, *War* IV, 11, 5). Taking an average day's march by an army in route as about 20–25 km, it is not hard to see that such an approximation (Herodotus does not try to be exact here) will bring us to el-<sup>c</sup>Arîsh. This is the unquestioned site of Rhinocolura and must be the site of Ienysus (How and Wells 1912: I, 257). From the other side, there is also a clear testimony that Wâdî el-<sup>c</sup>Arîsh must be *naḥal Muşri* = *naḥal Mişraim* “the Brook of Egypt” (Num 34:5; Josh 15:4, 14). This is in the Annals of Esarhaddon:

30 bēru qaqqar ultu Apqu ša pāti māt Sāme(ri)n[a] adi Rapîhi ana itê naḥal māt Muşur ašar nāru lā išu ina ib[lē] ḥarḥarrê kalkaltu mē būri ina dilūti ummāni ušašqi

Thirty double hours distance from Aphek, which is in the region of Sama(ri)a(?) to Raphia, towards the Brook of Egypt, a place having no river, by ropes, by chains (and) buckets, I caused the troops to drink well water.

The expression *ana itê naḥal māt Muşur*, “as far as, towards the Brook of Egypt,” assures us that the Brook of Egypt is *beyond* Raphia (Rainey 1982). Further confirmation that the Brook of Egypt has to be identified with Wâdî el-<sup>c</sup>Arîsh is the fact that *עַד-נַחַל מִצְרַיִם* (Isa 27:12) is rendered by ἕως Ῥινωκόρου in the LXX. As demonstrated by Titus' march mentioned above, Rhinocolura was three days' march from Pelusion. Esarhaddon also confirms that there was a town, *āl Aršâ ša itê naḥal māt Muşri* “the town of Aršâ which is beside the Brook of Egypt” (Borger 1956: 33 K1ch A, 16; et al.).

Therefore, we can affirm the equation: Rhinocolura = Ienysus = Aršâ. How, except for the first, the various name changes of this place at the mouth of the Brook of Egypt (= Wâdî el-<sup>c</sup>Arîsh) came about is clouded in mystery. The linguistic origin of Ienysus is unknown although one would assume that it must be Semitic.

The last segment of the coast is defined by Herodotus as follows:

... ἀπὸ δὲ Ἰηνύσου αὖτις Συρίων μέχρι Σερβωνίδος λίμνης, ... ἀπὸ Σερβωνίδος λίμνης, ... ἀπὸ ταύτης ἦδη Αἴγυπτος

... from Ienysus as far as Lake Serbonis it is again Syrian ... and after Lake Serbonis ... from there it is already Egypt.



The stress by Esarhaddon and Herodotus on the lack of water in this region is striking. For Herodotus, the area between Ienysus and Pelusion is “Syrian.” He does not call it Palestinian, and he has made it clear that the Arabians do not control it.

The final point is Pelusion, the border town of Egypt, located on the eastern branch of the Nile. This latter is נהר מצרים, “The River of Egypt,” in Gen 15:18. Herodotus tells how a certain Sethos took up a defensive position at Pelusion to meet the threatened invasion by Sennacherib (Herodotus, Book II, 141):

στρατοπεδεύσασθαι ἐν Πηλουσίῳ· ταύτη γὰρ εἰσι αἱ ἐσβολαί

He encamped at Pelusion, for here is the entryway (to Egypt).

However, he says elsewhere:

τῇ δὲ ἐλάχιστόν ἐστι καὶ συντομώτατον ἐκ τῆς βορρῆς θαλάσσης ὑπερβῆναι ἐς τὴν νοτίην καὶ Ἐρυθρὴν τὴν αὐτὴν ταύτην καλεομένην, ἀπὸ τοῦ Κασίου ὄρεος τοῦ οὐρίζοντος Αἰγυπτὸν τε καὶ Συρίην. . .

The shortest and most direct crossing from the northern sea to the southern sea (same is also called the Erythrean) is from the Casian promontory, which is the boundary between Egypt and Syria. . . (Herodotus II, 158)

Finally, in the same area, Herodotus tells us (II, 159):

καὶ Συρίοισι πεζῇ ὁ Νεκῶς συμβαλὼν ἐν Μαγδόλῳ ἐνίκησε, μετὰ δὲ τὴν μάχην Κάδουτιν πόλιν τῆς Συρίας ἐοῦσαν μεγάλην εἴλε.

. . . and Necho, encountering the Syrians with the land army, defeated them at Magdolo; after the battle he took the great Syrian city of Kadytes.

This latter conflict is often compared with the attempt by Josiah to stop Necho’s advance at Megiddo (2 Kgs 23:29; 2 Chr 35:20–24). There is a supposed confusion between Megiddo and Migdol on the eastern border of the delta. However, it is more likely a reflection of the clash between Necho and the forces of Nebuchadnezzar in the year 601, when it is said:

[š]attu 4-KAM šar Akkadi ummānšu idkēma ana māt Ḫattu illik, ina māt Ḫattu šal[aniš ittallak];

ina araḥ Kislimi pāni ummānšu iṣbatma ana māt Mišir illik; šar māt Mišir iṣmēma ummānšu idkē[ma],

ina tāḥāz šēri irti aḥamiš imḥašūma abiktu aḥamiš mādiš iškunū; šar Akkadi u ummānšu itūramma ana Babili [itūra].

In the fourth year the king of Akkad mustered his army and marched to Ḫatti-land. In Ḫatti-land he [went about] trium[phantly].

In the month of Kislev, he took the lead of his army and marched to Egypt; the king of Egypt heard (about it) and mustered his army.

In open battle they smote each other’s breast and inflicted a severe defeat on each other; the king of Akkad and his army turned back and [returned] to Babylon. (BM 2196: 5–7; Wiseman 1956: 70–71)

The Babylonian scribe puts the best face on it that he can. It is as if the battle were a draw. But Nebuchadnezzar went home with his army badly mauled and stayed in Babylon for the next year, and in the following year (599 B.C.) he conducted war against the Arabs, possibly punishing them for their lack of support in the campaign to Egypt. But he did not try his luck against the Egyptian army for some time.

Meanwhile, Necho captured Kadytis. This is probably referred to by the prophet Jeremiah:

אשר היה דבר־יהוה אל־ירמיהו הנביא  
אל־פלשתים בטרם יכּה פרעה את־עזה

The word of the LORD that came to the prophet Jeremiah concerning the Philistines, before Pharaoh conquered Gaza. (Jer 47:1)

The geographical situation as depicted by Herodotus is illustrated in figure 1.

## ADDENDUM

It remains to note a recent suggestion (Jacobson 1999) that the Greeks associated Παλαιστήνη with παλαιστής “wrestler” in meaning as well as in spelling. The kind of spelling convention mentioned by Noth (1939: 133) is acceptable, but the idea (Jacobson 1999: 68–69) that the association was made because the Greeks knew that Jacob had wrestled with the Angel of the Lord (Gen 32:24–28) requires unwarranted credulity. And according to Josephus, Philistia is just where we know it from biblical and Assyrian texts of the Iron Age. Furthermore, it is no longer feasible to assert that Greek Φοίνικες (similar to φοῖνιξ = “purple”) reflects a knowledge of the meaning of Canaan (\*Kina<sup>c</sup>na > K<sup>2</sup>nā<sup>c</sup>an). The name of the color in the Nuzi texts is to be read *qinahhu*, and most likely signifies “blue,” not “purple” (Landsberger 1967: 166). Therefore, any connection with Canaan is precluded.



Fig. 1. Herodotus' description of the East Mediterranean coast.

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